



# I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East Frequently Asked Questions

## Where is the project located?

The **I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East** project corridor is located in Kittitas County, Washington, along a 15-mile stretch of Interstate 90. The corridor passes thru the Wenatchee National Forest, and begins on the eastern side of Snoqualmie Pass at mile post 55.1 and ends at milepost 70.3 near the town of Easton.

Due to the concentration of deficiencies located along Keechelus Lake, the **I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East - Hyak to Keechelus Dam** project from mile post 55.1 (Hyak) to mile post 59.9 (Keechelus Lake Dam) has been chosen as the first project in the larger **I-90 Snoqualmie Pass East - Hyak to Easton** project.

## How is this project funded?

This project (engineering, right of way, and construction) is funded with \$387.7 million from the 2005 Transportation Partnership Funding Package

## Why is this project needed?

The purpose of this project is to meet projected traffic demands, improve public safety, and meet identified project needs along this 15-mile stretch of I-90.

The project is needed to:

- Reduce the risk of avalanche to the traveling public and eliminate road closures required for avalanche control work.
- Reduce the risk of rock and debris falling onto the roadway from unstable slopes.
- Repair structural deficiencies by replacing damaged pavement.
- Provide for the growth-related increases in traffic volume.
- Connect habitat across I-90 for fish and wildlife.

## What benefits will the taxpayer see?

- Widen the roadway from 4 lanes to 6 lanes
- Expand chain on/off areas to improve operations and increase safety
- Replace deteriorating pavement with pavement designed for a life of 40+ years
- Straighten curves and increase safe driving speed to improve safety and operation
- Construct wildlife crossings at select locations for safe passage of drivers and wildlife

## When will the project begin?

WSDOT will aggressively move forward with design efforts now that a preferred alternative has been identified. Construction could begin as early as Spring 2010, and is estimated to take 5 to 6 years to complete.

## For more information:

Additional project details, and recent progress can be found at the project website

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/Projects/I90/HyaktoKeechelusDam>

To leave comments, ask questions, or if you would like to arrange a presentation for your group or organization, please contact:

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## Interesting I-90 Facts

- Average traffic thru this section of interstate is approximately 27,000 vehicles per day, and rises to as much as 58,000 on weekends and holidays which exceeds the amount of traffic I-90 was designed to carry. Each year 35 million tons of freight and 10 million vehicles travel over Snoqualmie Pass.
- During the past 12 years Snoqualmie Pass was closed an average of 120 hours per year. Of those closures, 80 hours per year were related to avalanches.
- It is conservatively estimated that avalanche closures cost business and private travelers \$17.5 million annually.
- It is estimated that on average, nearly \$35 million worth of freight cross the pass daily.
- Snoqualmie Pass is within an area recognized as a critical connective link in the north/south movement of wildlife in the Cascade Range.
- Interstate 90 is a designated National Scenic Byway.
- From 1991 to 2001 There were more than 240 animals killed by vehicles along the I-90 corridor. It is important to recognize that this number only consists of deer and elk that were removed by maintenance from the roadway and does not include other species or any animals that may have been hit but died out of visibility of the roadway. Understanding this, it is nearly certain that the total roadkill numbers are much greater.

## History

- In 1905, the first motorized traffic crossed Snoqualmie Pass on a wagon trail.
- In 1915 a dirt road was constructed.



- Pavement was added to I-90 in 1934.



- Concrete snow sheds were added in 1950 and 1952.
- In 1956, the federal government passed the Interstate Highway Act, and highway US-10 became Interstate 90.
- The new interstate was rerouted and widened to 4 lanes between 1953 and 1968
- Over the last 30 years I-90 has received various alignment upgrades and pavement rehabilitation.